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This was the year when everything happened! Having had a taste of abnormal heat, war, earthquake, pestilence (a smallpox epidemic), we also had this winter the biggest snowstorm in years. Great wet flakes came drifting down over the landscape, driven at times by high winds, until the School and its surroundings looked like part of a scene from "Snowbound." Naturally all the camera fans, which means everybody here, took full advantage of an opportunity which most of them would never have again. After our first attempts to walk around the city, though, we found it was rather better to remain inside and not expose our persons to the assaults of our good Arab friends who, carried away with the excitement of the occasion, were bombarding all passers-by with snow-balls--showing no respect for age, sex or personal dignity. It was all in good fun, but the snow-balls were very large and very solid. We could only be thankful that baseball is not one of the national sports--otherwise many more of the missiles might have found their mark. Of course the snow was gone in two or three days, but while it lasted the city and especially the Mount of Olives were incredibly beautiful. A more somber aspect of the story is that many of our trees, particularly the young ones, were severely damaged. The effects will be seen for a long time to come.

In the last Jerusalem Newsletter I boasted, somewhat prematurely, of the kind treatment we had received from the weather for our field trips. The letter had hardly been written before we entered on a long spell of wet and threatening weather, culminating in the big snow of '57, which disrupted our long-range plans and made it necessary to improvise short trips at equally short notice. One afternoon we took off to climb the Mount of Temptation at Jericho. It can hardly be claimed that this is a trip of great scientific importance but from the human point of view, it seemed important to escape from our two-weeks' confinement in the chill of the School buildings and the fumes of our small kerosene stoves to the delightful warmth of the Jordan Valley and a leg-stretching climb up the mountainside. The ascent to the top is strenuous, but mercifully brief, and the view is sufficiently rewarding. While the site has no great historical or archaeological importance, the trip is well-justified, even by American School standards, because of the magnificent panorama eastward across the Jordan Valley, south over the Wilderness of Judea and northwest over the hills to the purple height of Baal Hazor.

Another hastily-improvvised trip was an afternoon drive to Tekoa. Here we had the unusual experience of getting the car stuck in the mud, about a kilometer from our destination. The water from melting snows

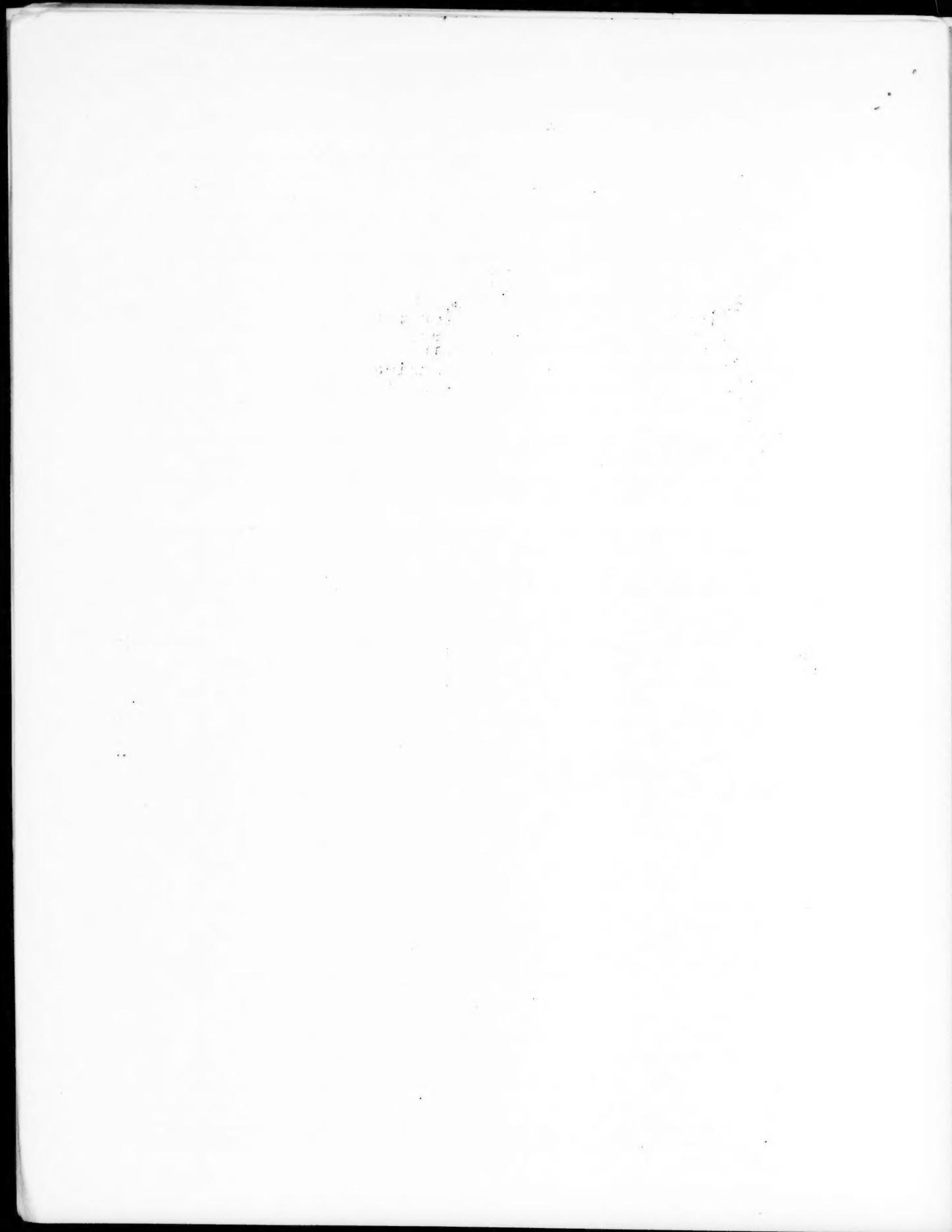
had deeply penetrated the soil and, although more than a week had passed since the storm, the track across the last of the fields to be traversed proved to be impassable, so we had to disembark and make the rest of the trip on foot. One could hardly help but feel that the ends of poetic justice had been served and that our humble pedestrian approach was more pleasing to the spirit of Amos. None of us had been there before and all were impressed with the extent of the remains, although none of the ruins now visible go back to Israelite times. Both Bethlehem and Jerusalem are plainly in view from Tekoa, one of the interesting items never learned from books.

For three successive weeks we had planned a trip to Moab, but each week the return of rain made it impossible to go. We finally made it during the third week of February. The sun was out, the hills were green, the red anemones were showing in the grass, and the almond trees in the Jordan Valley were in full bloom. Since one of our objectives was a visit to Diban, we took with us Awni Dajani, the Assistant Director of Antiquities in Jordan, who had had no previous opportunity to see the results of the excavations made by the American School during the last three seasons. We drove first of all to the north brink of the vast chasm of the Wadi Mojib--the Arnon of the Old Testament--and then, after a picnic lunch, returned to Diban, which is only a short distance away. In the absence of Dr. Norton or any of the earlier excavators, we were fortunate in having Imran, the School driver, as our guide; since he has worked at Diban during every season except the first, he was able to explain what had been done each year and to give us in broad outline the significance of the things we saw. On the way out we had stopped briefly to see the famous mosaic map of Palestine in the Greek church at Madeba, so on our return we passed through the town without stopping and drove directly to Mount Nebo. Once again, the site was a new one for all of us and we found it properly impressive. Although there was a considerable haze, unusual for this time of year, the view westward across the Jordan Valley was as magnificent as its eastward counterpart from the Mount of Temptation, and the film over the distant horizons almost convinced one that he could see the full extent of the Promised Land as described in Deut. 34:1-3. Leaving Nebo, we drove directly down the mountainside before us--the area which the Bible calls "the slopes of Pisgah" (Deut. 3:17 RV)--by a road on which even Imran had never gone before--if indeed one can call it a road! The next day he confessed that he had been driving "over his stomach" most of the way. Twice we had to get out and remove boulders from the path, but at last arrived safely in the neighborhood of Teller-Rama, the biblical Beth Haran, and there joined the new super-highway now being constructed from Jerusalem to Amman by way of the Wadi Sir. On this we were soon speeding past Telleilat Ghassul and were in the foothills leading up to Jerusalem within an hour after leaving Nebo.

A later trip involved us in a bit of practical archaeology. For a long time Imran had been promoting a visit to a tomb discovered in the neighborhood of the village of Kufr Malik by a party from the American School last year. A favorable day finally arrived and we set out immediately after breakfast, accompanied again by Dr. Dajani, whose authority and technical competence were especially necessary for an expedition of this kind. From Kufr Malik, a few miles north-

east of Ramallah, we hiked down the hills toward the Jordan Valley in the direction of the Roman-Byzantine ruin known as Khirbet Samieh. After about forty-five minutes of walking we came upon the narrow opening of the roadside tomb we were looking for. Inside, we quickly found more pieces of the type of pottery which had attracted the attention of Dr. Mendenhall and his party last year, and an hour and a half's digging in the floor of the cave brought to light a nice collection of Middle Bronze pots and jugs. Since the roof of the cave had fallen in long ago, there were few complete pieces, but all of us had the satisfaction at least of digging them out ourselves. Dr. Dajani was good enough to write up a brief account of our miniature dig for the Jordan newspapers in which due credit was given to the American School. In the afternoon we walked down the rest of the track far enough to see the site of Ain Samieh and the meager remains of its ancient buildings, and then returned to the car. We rounded out an already busy day by visiting Beitin, biblical Bethel,--where Dr. Kelso's recent excavations are unfortunately covered,--and by climbing Et-Tell, the site of ancient Ai, from which a striking view opens out toward "all the plain of the Jordan" (Gen. 13:3, 10).

The most exciting event in recent weeks for academic circles in Jordan was the return of the Dead Sea Scrolls to Jerusalem. At the beginning of the troubles last November they were hastily removed from the Palestine Museum and stored in the vaults of the Amman branch of the Ottoman Bank. For a variety of reasons they had remained there ever since, inaccessible to scholars and, worse yet, threatened with deterioration from the dampness of their temporary refuge. Last week a propitious time for their return seemed to have arrived and the government, in preparation for the event, organized an official committee charged with taking care of them and supervising their study, previous work having been done under an informal arrangement in which citizens of Jordan played a very small part. The new committee consists, ex officio, of the Director of Antiquities, the Assistant Director, the Mayor of Jerusalem, and the Directors of the Ecole Biblique and the American School. It has no responsibility for the finances of the enterprise or any concern with questions regarding the legal ownership of the scrolls, such as have recently arisen, but is solely concerned with seeing that the study of them is efficiently carried on and the results duly published. There is no reason to think that there will be any basic change in policy or in the personnel of the scholars involved. The first duty of the committee was to accept delivery of the scrolls from the bank and to accompany them back to Jerusalem, a duty which, I am glad to report, was carried out with proper ceremony and dispatch. At the Jerusalem end of the journey the convoy was greeted by officials of the municipality and, with the utmost enthusiasm, by Dr. Huntzinger, who had been awaiting this moment impatiently for the past four months, and Father Milik, who had returned to Jerusalem only a few days before. The cases containing the scrolls were opened in the presence of the committee and the official visitors and all were relieved to find that damage from dampness, though noticeable in some instances, was not as extensive as had been feared. It seems unlikely that they will be removed from Jerusalem again, however critical the situation may become. Systematic work has now been resumed and activity in the "scrollerly" will soon be normal once more.



When I last wrote, it seemed unlikely that there would be any archaeological work in Jordan before early summer, but that situation has now changed and Miss Kenyon is actively at work again in Old Testament Jericho--if it is proper to apply that term to a site which now seems to go back 5000 years before the beginning of the biblical period. She arrived with a party of four two weeks ago, spent three days at the American School while getting the beautiful new building of the British School in running order and then, having officially transferred the British School to the new property, departed for a four-week dig at Jericho. The dig is a small one, both in terms of duration and of personnel involved, but it will be continued, if all goes well, next October and November. The beginning of the work at Jericho diminished our already diminutive student body by one third, since Dr. Toombs, whose main concern at present is field archaeology, felt he had to take advantage of the opportunity to get some practical experience and so deserted us. While the rest were not impelled to follow his example--and indeed there would have been no room for us if we had--we all expect to spend at least a half day a week in Jericho during the rest of March. Miss Kenyon's immediate, and indeed only, objective for this present season is the clearing of the east side of the neolithic tower so as to trace the entrance in that direction and perhaps solve the mystery of its purpose and practical use.

The School has had one visitor from abroad since last writing--Dr. Kapelrud of Oslo, who stayed with us for ten days before leaving for a much longer stay in Baghdad--and we are anticipating a visit from Dr. Carl Kraeling next week-end. We also manage to keep our social life from becoming entirely ingrown by having guests in to join our family circle for Sunday evening dinner in the Director's House. Recent guests include Mr. Bird, American Vice-Consul, Probst and Mrs. Weigelt from the Lutheran Church, Rev. and Mrs. Willard Jones of MTRWA, Rev. Graham Leonard of the Ramallah Friends' Meeting, Mr. Nelson of the UN Truce Supervision Team, and (of course) Dr. and Mrs. Lanaan. Père de Vaux is also a frequent visitor and has twice been our guest at tea; his breezy cheerfulness and delightful conversation make his visits always seem too short.

Robert C. Dentan, Director

Jerusalem School